

We Are Spartans

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Summary: Three next generation Spartans battle their pasts and each other as they are forced to team up and destroy the Covenant force that threatens their future. Chapter 6! Wooooo! WARNING: Excessive language.

1. Prologue

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_Author's Note: _This is my first work, so plenty of feedback is requested. Please read and review, and don't fear flaming me about something wrong with it. I accept criticism like the next man. Secondly, this is a Disclaimer's Note. I don't own Halo, Master Chief, or any cahracters, storylines, or plots referenced to the Halo series. I do, however, own the three main characters mentioned in this story. Thirdly, this is just a prologue. One I have a little more time to work on this story, I promise to have another chapter set up. So, just be patient with me.

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><p>We Are Spartans_

By: GundamFreakX

Prologue

Space is such a vast universe, full of stars, planets, comets, asteroids, galaxies, and the like. Humanity has only been able to travel to such a small number of these systems. Even in the year 2575, we've only scratched the surface of this world. There's so much space, and yet humanity has such little time to explore. For some,

the journey ends after a long life of adventuring and conquest. For others, the journey ends in a flash, and they never learn of the places they could've gone before they met their demise.

For Corporal Jonathan Mendez, he had to help make that choice for one of his teammates: death quick and painless, or death slow and painful.

Floating above the surface of the vast, deserted planet, Octanus VI, floated one of the Navy's greatest star-traveling ships in the fleet. Named after its previous ancestor, _The Pillar of Autumn II_ sure was a beauty. Integrated with light-speed travel, 20 cannons, and 2 MAC-guns on each side, this ship was feared by all, even the vast alien cult, the Covenant. If both were to be fired, it could easily take down a Covenant carrier. She may have been slow, but as they say, "Slow and steady wins the race." In this case, it won a war that has been going on ever since 2552, with the Master Chief, an icon to anyone entering the new, improved, and now public-known MJORLINR program, allowing soldiers to become Spartans, just like John, aka Spartan 117.

Upon this ship were two of those Spartans that have now multiplied by the dozens, now that they have indeed been deemed heroes. One was Corporal Mendez, aka Spartan 491, who was looking down upon the desert planet from the main cockpit. The other was Sergeant Samuel "Wolf" Raenef, aka Spartan 430, who was currently recovering in the adjoined Cryogenesis Chamber, with his compartment moved to the cockpit to give orders. He always was one to make his authority over the crew known.

Now, though, his authority was being used for sure. Upon the surface of Octanus VI was their third teammate, Private First Class Nicholas Stanson, aka Spartan 13, now surrounded by the Covenant force they were all too familiar with. As he stared up towards the sky, knowing the location of _The Pillar of Autumn II_, he was waiting for his request to be fulfilled: he wanted Mendez to fire the two MAC-guns upon his position, killing the Covenant onslaught, and him.

The pressure was definitely on Mendez now. He had to choose. There was no flipping a coin on it. There was no trial-and-error. There was no second-guessing. It was now or never. Fire the guns, or let him die by their hands. He would have to make this choice again.

"Come on, Mendez," yelled Raenef through his Telepathic Communicator (TC), newly installed in the next-generation of Spartans, allowing their communications to not be encoded by the enemy. This was good, since the crew didn't need to know the fear they were both feeling. To other humans, Spartans were soldiers that had no fear. They would take any challenge head-on. They would stare death in face and say, "Come and get me, bitch!" In reality, a Spartan was like any other human. They had feelings. They also had emotions, but they were secretly guarded by their one-way visor on their helmets. If humanity were to see a true Spartan in the face, then there would be nothing to see. It would be just a face, tattered and worn by the everlasting war.

"I can't sir," thought Mendez, who realized of his fear when he called him "sir". The three had never established ranks between each other. To them, knowing your teammates' names was a key element in

your survival. They had always called each other by their first or last names, depending on which sounded better. Now, that didn't seem important now. _Damn, I am nervous,_ he thought to himself, hoping that Raenef hadn't picked that up through the TC.

"Look, Jonathan," thought Raenef, trying to calm him down by calling him by his first name, _"you're up here because he sent you to fire the guns. He used all of his teleporter juice to have you fire the guns, and this is how you're going to repay him? By letting your emotions get the best of you?"_

"Of course not, butâ€¦I can't do it. I can't do it!"

His mind was in haywire. As Raenef continued to yell in his mind to push the damn button that would fire both MAC-guns at the same time, Mendez began to think back. He thought back to when they all had joined together as a team. Then, he thought back to when he and Raenef had captured 13, as Nicholas liked to be called back then. He thought back to when he had found Raenef after he had been missing for 2 years. He thought back to when a decision he made just like this one which almost cost him his military service if Raenef hadn't taken him in. He thought backâ€¦to the beginning, to when he becameâ€¦a Spartan.

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>Author's Footnote: **So, what you think? On the edge of your seat? Begging for more? Because I'm eager to type some more for you. Just please, remember to review. Thanks.

Signing off,
> GundamFreakX<p>

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2. Chapter 1 Recollection

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_Author's Note: _Thanks for the few reviews, especially to you, Electromotive Force. He helped me correct a couple of errors in the Prologue. First off, the ranks of the main characters from the Prologue are mixed up with the Marines. They're supposed to be Navy. So, Corporal Jonathan Mendez is really Chief Petty Officer Mendez, and Raenef is Master Chief Petty Officer Samuel Raenef, and Nicholas is Petty Officer First Class Nicholas Stansonford. Also, there's not much action in this chapter, but usually, is there not in the first chapter. Don't worry, though, things will heat up. Just, please keep sending me reviews. I can't wait to really get this thing going. But, without further ado, here's Chapter 1 of 'We Are Spartans'.

* * *

>Chapter 1

"_Recollection"__

The year is 2570, 5 years before Mendez would have to make that decision. Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Mendez was waiting outside the main office of one of the floating MAC-guns protecting Earth from any Covenant attacks. Ever since the Spartan project was public knowledge, they were hired on more jobs to end tyranny, war, terrorism, and anything else more often than the SEALs. The SEAL project was practically dead anyway, since most people were now wanting to join the MJORLINR project to become those famous, ass-kicking Spartans. For many, such a task was impossible. First, you had to make it past the grueling physical training with accompanied bookwork. Although the training was easy for most, some aspiring Spartans had never even finished high school, and had no clue about the teachings of Nirvana, the newly-installed AI for Schooling purposes. Then, after training was done, the second, and worst, part of becoming a Spartan was making the body ready. Through surgery, injections, and practical experimentation, the brain was made to think faster, the body taller, and the muscles made like steel. This was where more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of those who did sign up either die or get disfigured beyond repair, or they make it past this and begin Spartan suit training.

As Mendez waited for his orders from Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Johnson, this was what his mind was on. He was always thinking back to the past. It went back to the previous life that he was given special permission to remember, since during the whole "Experiment" process, they injected you with small amounts of amnesia serum so the past won't sneak up on you. Mendez was always thinking. It kind of frightened the naval officers when he was able to figure out all of the mind puzzles in new records, but he almost failed most of his physical exams. It took him 3 years of Basics to finally reach passing scores. Unbeknownst to the Navy, Mendez was a cripple. He would always cut gym in school just to read books in the library. He never played outside, but instead, he would engulf himself in the latest newspaper. When he joined up, the people of Signum Terrian, his home planet, were almost relieved to see him go.

Now, you're probably wondering how Mendez was able to sneak past the amnesia injection. Well, it started with-

"Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Mendez, MCPON Johnson will see you now." Mendez recognized the voice of Cortana, an ancient AI famous for traveling with Master Chief himself in his Crusades to destroy the Covenant. Now that he was dead, Cortana would not accept another Spartan, so she became Johnson's secretary. She sure was fast at filing paperwork, though, as long as the files were accessible through the mainframe.

"Good afternoon, Mendez," she said when Mendez entered through her connecting hallway. Since she was an AI, the computer pedestal she was displayed on was practically her computer, desk, filing cabinet, and everything, so what was the point in getting an extra room for her? Mendez always thought it best that even AI be given a window at least, but that was him thinking again.

"Good afternoon, Cortana. How are things with the Chief?"

"Well, the medical exam papers came back. They say he doesn't need the excitement of the Navy anymore. Hell, even an induction ceremony

practically gave him a stroke. He'll be leaving in a couple of weeks."

"So, when he leaves, who will replace him?"

"In my opinion, hopefully someone who will move me into a room, so I could at least have someone to talk to than these other stubborn AI."

Mendez couldn't help but chuckle along with her. That was another reason why Cortana was so special. She had a sense of humor. Not very many AI, no wait, no other AI had that gift.

"Thanks for the greeting, Mendez. You're one of the only people that will actually talk to these AI. Sometimes, I don't know what other people see in us. You and Wolf are the only oth-

She then realized her mistake. She mentioned Samuel's nickname. She looked to Mendez and was able to see the little gleam through the visor.

"I-I'm sorry, Mendez," she said.

"It's okay," he replied.

"Did youâ€¦?"

"Not yet, but I'll find him someday. I know he's still alive."

"Wolf", or Master Chief Petty Officer Samuel Raenef, was the leader behind the duo team, with partner Mendez. They were well-known throughout the galaxy as some of the best Spartans from Project MJORLINR. They were called on the most missions, succeeded the most, and rarely came home with a scratch on the armor. They were the best. They were, until Wolf was sent on a solo mission without Mendez's consent or knowing. By the time he had been missing for a week, Mendez finally learned about Wolf's status: MIA. That was two years ago. Still, Mendez would always try to find spare time to go and search for him. If it weren't for Wolf in the first place, Mendez wouldn't even be standing in Cortana's hallway talking to her. Not after what he didâ€¦

"Chief Petty Officer Mendez, is that you? Would you hurry up? You can't keep an old man waiting forever!" Ah, the familiar big man's voice. Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Avery Johnson was his name, and everyone knew it. Known as the sole Marine survivor of the destruction of the first encounter of the Halo rings, he was well-known for his service with the Marines. Now, he was ready for retire, and was only good for striking conversations and giving out orders. Yet, he had always done that before he became an old geezer. Whoever said, "Old habits die hard" sure knew what they were talking about.

"Well, I guess this is my leave, Cortana. I'll catch you later."

"OK, so long, space cowboy," she called. She always called Mendez "Space Cowboy". She knew he hated that. Maybe that's why she would always call him that. She could hear him grumble those quiet

profanity words as he entered Johnson's room.

Johnson's office was decorated from top to bottom with pictures, plaques, medals, and newspaper clippings, all given to him at special ceremonies or as gifts from home. His wood-paneled wall, marble tile floor, popcorn ceilings, and oak desk, rarities in space, gave the room an "Earthy-touch" feel. His walls, if there were any left, had pictures of the different squads he led, induction ceremonies, family, friends, and especially Master Chief, which he claimed he had the honor of serving alongside him several times, as well as an assortment of medals, award plaques, and news clippings from different areas of Earth: from the United States to all the way from China, when he was Sergeant Johnson of the Marines, he was very popular. Kind of like a hero.

Sitting across from the desk in his rolling chair, leaning back in the relaxed position, was fat, plump, old, funny, wise, and Mr. Smartass MCPON Johnson, the big man himself, with emphasis on big. He sure did look different now than what he did look like when most of the photos on the wall were taken. In those pictures, he was a soldier. Now, he was a man on the edge of his life, still working for service of his planet. Hoo-rah!

Remembering where he was and who he was with, Mendez quickly stood tall and saluted. "Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Mendez reporting for duty, sir."

"At ease," he replied, and Mendez slowly relaxed, letting his body etch back to the grooves of his armor. He sat down in the chair facing Johnson's desk.

"First off, how are things on your side of the world, Mendez?"

"Well, it could be less boring."

"Hah, as usual. All work and no play, that's what you are. If you damn young ones don't start living now, you won't have another chance." He then wheezed, as he let his emotions calm down. Mendez stood to help, but was waved off as he sat back in his rolling chair. "It's alright," he said, regaining his breath. "I just let myself go there for a second. I suppose Cortana told you about my problem."

"You'll be leaving in two weeks, sir. That's what she said."

"Yeah, I knew it. She doesn't keep anything from you. Those damn bastards don't know anything, though. I'm perfectly fine to stay here for another year."

Mendez looked at his chief. For some reason, he knew that wasn't true. But there was no point in telling him that.

"I believe that you are looking for some work, Mendez. Is that right?"

"Yessir," he replied. "I've just been eager to get off of Cairo, that's all."

"Yeah, we all strive to move and do things. It's human nature. Well,

to your good luck, which, might I add, you have a lot of, we have a mission made specifically for you. Straight from Command itself."

_Damn, from Command, _thought Mendez. Command rarely gave orders to one soldier at a time. The last time was withâ€¦_Wolf. _His thoughts trailed away once again to that frightful evening, or day, or whatever it was two years ago. You can never tell in space.

"_Excuse me, Chief Petty Officer Mendez?" came the voice of the nightly messenger._

"_Yeah, that's me."_

"_Telegram from Command."_

"_Thank you." He took the note, hoping it was news from Wolf. He had been worried ever since he turned up not in morning workout two mornings ago. He stared at the letter for a while, letting the location of where the letter came from soak in, and then, he looked at its contents._

_**UNSC Priority Transmission
> __**From: UNSC Command
> __**To: CPO Jonathan Mendez
> __**Subject: Mission Report
> __**Classification: N/A**_

**Dear Mendez,**

**We are displeased to inform you that two days ago at exactly 1800 hours military time, on May 30, 2568, Master Chief Petty Officer Samuel Raenef was reported missing. His Pelican was flying over a restricted region as we were monitoring his progress in a solo mission. Unfortunately, at 1400 hours military time, the blip on our radar system indicating his location disappeared. Several search parties were sent around a 100 mile radius around the last known location of his ship, but to no avail. We at Command are sorry to report this horrible truth to you**.

The rest of the note had more content, but by this time, Mendez had thrown away the letter, ran to his room, and cried the night away. The man that had saved his life, job, and dignity was gone. How could he take such a punishment?

"Hey, buddy?" Johnson interrupted his thoughts, bringing him back to reality. He sure was leaving it a lot today. He tried to suppress his thoughts as he strained to listen to the mission from Command.

"Damn, boy, I heard you were a thinker, but damn. Keep that up, and you'll be inducted to just give orders like me." He chuckled at his own joke. Mendez chuckled along with to hide what he was feeling.

"Now, about that mission, sir?"

"Yeah, yeah. Now, Navy Command has found this ancient structure in the middle of the Caspian Sea. They don't know the origin, but they believe it may be ancient Forerunner technology."

Forerunners? On Earth? Mendez felt a little shock from that one.

"Now, I know what you're thinking? Crazy, huh? Well, that's why they're sending you. You've dealt with Forerunner technology before, and they want you to check it out and see if it is. You'll leave tomorrow at 0800 hours. You're dismissed."

"Thank you, sir," Mendez said as he got up from his seat. When he was about to leave, Johnson caught him at the door.

"It's been great giving orders to such a soldier as you, Mendez. You remind me so much of Master Chief. Always rushing into tasks to get them done. If I'm not back when you do get back, I just want to tell youâ€|thank you." He replied, wiping a tear from his eye. Mendez tried his best to hide his.

"The pleasure's all mine," Mendez replied, shaking Johnson's hand before leaving his office.

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>Author's Footnote: **As I said, not much action, but it will get better. Please send those reviews and tell me of anything wrong. Thanks again to Electromotive Force for pointing that mistake out.

Signing off,
> GundamFreakX<p>

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3. Chapter 2 Lost in Cobalt

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_Author's Note: _Hey, I've finally have the second chapter up. Now, as you read this, you'll probably get this weird sensation that Mendez and Wolf are...well, you'll see. Anyway, I jsut have one thing to say...don't listen to it. I had to ignore myself as I was writing this. I was afraid I wa making to like this, but if I rewrote it, it wouldn't sound right. Thoughts were all over this one. Just read, ignore that gut-feeling, and Chapter 3 will come soon enough. I must say, though, this one took awhile. I thought about making this two seperate chapters, but thought better and made it just one. I hope you enjoy the next installment, and keep those reviews coming.

* * *

Chapter 2

"Lost in Cobalt""

Mendez never enjoyed the hours before operation. He never knew why they would just give him the specs, tell him to get his gear, and report to the ship on the double. He needed some action, not the drag before the drop. He was a man for moving and doing and shooting andâ€|everything but wasting time. Unfortunately, Command never listens to the pleas of one Spartan, but the cries of many. And, as it usually goes, he was the only one complaining.

So, he devised a routine he would always follow before he was sent out. After he would receive his specs, he would go to the gym and do an hour of workout in the 2G room. That usually made the time speed up to normal. Ever since he became a Spartan, time seemed to slow down. The doctors said that was part of the experiment process so they could have aster reflexesâ€|_and major headaches_, thought Mendez. After workout, he would head to the mess hall and have the usual microwave food they served everyday. They tried to make it fancy by having a different meal every day of the week. That gets old fast, though, as you always know how big the lines are going to be each day. After a meal, he would take a shower, get ready for bed, and get as much sleep as possible. That amount of sleep was usuallyâ€|5 hours. Hey, when you're a soldier, the last thing you do is complain about your sleep hours.

Let's seeâ€|, Mendez thought, staring at the clock in his room. It hung over a picture of a bunch of Spartans. These Spartans were, in fact, a team that Mendez proudly led years ago, beforeâ€|

"Sir, the engines are failing!" screamed the pilot, trying to steady the battle-hardened Pelican ship as it was bombarded by Covenant fire. Mendez had never thought they would try a surprise attack. He should've prepared for the worst. Now, he was paying the price for it.

"We're losing too much altitude, pilot!" he screamed to the front as his gun was blazing at the ship, unable to make a dent at all, knowing the Covenant carrier was protected by its forcefield. As the other Spartans on the ship also fired their weapons with no avail, he could sense that they all too well knew the fate that was upon them.

"We're falling too fast! I won't be able to make emergency landing anyway at all. We're going to crash!"

The ship began to gain more speed as its nose rushed towards the ground. The ship began to rattle as gravity and friction grounded on the plating. The Spartans could do nothing but hold on for dear life. That is, if life would be given after this.

Soon, the cockpit's window detected the first sign of land. It was all desert surface. There was no civilization and no soft landing zone. This wasn't going to end well.

_"Sir!" yelled Petty Officer First Class Harold Kuzak from the back

of the ship. Mendez knew it was him. He could detect his Arabian voice a mile away. He looked in the direction he heard the voice, and detected the only Spartan in blue armor. He was the rookie, and this was only his third assignment with the Spartan team. When he looked, they eyed each other for a while, hoping someone would say something._

They shared a history. Kuzak was an illegal alien from Eridanus III. That planet fell under communism years ago, and allowed no one to leave. He snuck out and joined the Navy in an attempt to start a new life. Mendez, the captain of the squad he was assigned to when he graduated from Project MJORLINR, found out about his secret. That's when Mendez promised Kuzak he didn't have to go home.

As they stared, Kuzak slowly lifted his hand and saluted his captain. Mendez saluted back, for he knew all that there was to say.

"Everyone, brace for impact!" yelled the pilot, as the ship lived its last five seconds before meeting its demise.

Let's seeâ€| he thought, trying to get the memory to go away. He grew tired of memories today. They were doing nothing but wasting time. And he needed all the time he had to get the most out of his sleep. _If it's 5:00 now, then when I'm done working out, it'll be 7:00. I'll eat 'til 8:00, end shower at 8:30, and I should be in bed at 9:00. _He then groaned at his routine. It was just like this in his last assignmentâ€|and the one before thatâ€|and every other assignment before that one, too. _God, this gets boring after a whileâ€|_

He made his way across the hallway, which was a very long hallway, since this hallway had most of the soldier's quarters. You'd figure Earth's MAC-gun defenses were mostly guns and cannons instead of hotels. Nope, it's nothing like that on Cairo. They at least tried to make you feel at home in a war that never seemed to end.

As we walked the hallway, he glanced out the long windows on his right, and was able to see Earth from there. He paused for a while and glanced out at the vast space and the small planet in front of him.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Looking at Earth from space was worth way more than a billion. Mendez always was full of thoughts every time he glanced at the blue planet he had trained so hard to protect. In fact, he was glancing at his home country now: the United States. From space, you couldn't tell what the state lines were. It wasn't a fancy map or anything. It was just a big mass of land. So were the other countries surrounding it. They weren't color-coded. Nor were the cities and capitals marked either. In space, it was just land surrounded by water. It was beautiful. _No wonder we protect it, _he thought to himself. _It looks so beautiful, and space-goers have to have something pretty to look at. Don't you think so, Wolf? _He turned to his left, as if expecting someone to be there. There wasn't. He then remembered that Wolf was gone. That he was still missing. And that Mendez was still trying to search for someone everyone told him was dead. He placed his head down against the window and cried, the tears landing on the visor of his helmet,

as he remembered the last night he saw his captain.

_Wolf had just got back from the mess hall, which was the Friday Night Special of Meatloaf and Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, and was about to go back to his room when he spotted Mendez in the hallway. His partner was at it again, staring out the window, looking at Earth, as if the planet was calling his name. In a way, it was, since Mendez had never visited the planet before. Earth hadn't really been in any danger since the age of Master Chief, and Earth didn't really need the tyrant protectors anymore, so Mendez and Wolf were always being sent out to the other planets that had a greater chance of being attacked. _

Wolf had been to Earth once, and it was everything he had ever imagined it would be. Mendez always was jealous of that, and he would always ask questions about it. Even though Wolf grew tired of it, and Mendez knew that, Wolf would always answer as best as he could. He liked feeling superior over his teammate. After all, if it weren't for Wolf, Mendez wouldn't be on the force. Not after what he didâ€¦|

"Hey, Wolf, what's up?" Mendez called out, waking Wolf from his trance. He glanced at the clock, which told him he had been standing there for at least 5 minutes. He had been thinking for too long. His training officer had warned him about that. If he were to find out he had been standing around, Wolf would have to drop down and give him 50.

_"Oh nothing," he replied, trying to make himself steady. _I hope he didn't notice how long I had been standing there, _he thought._

"What were you thinking about?" Mendez asked.

He did notice. _"Oh, nothing, but can I have a word with you for just a second?"_

"Sure."

"Let's go to your room since it's closer," Wolf said, but that wasn't the real reason why he wanted to go to Mendez's room. When he stepped into his quarters, Wolf felt like he had stepped onto a private beach. The whole room had a tropical feel to it. He had it decorated with fake palm trees, wood-kneaded furniture, and a mosquito-roof bed. Since Mendez's home planet, Signum Terrian, was a tropical climate, he wanted his new home to feel like the old home. Wolf didn't mind at all.

"Listen, Mendez," Wolf began, sitting in one of the chairs as Mendez sat on his bed, "there's something I've been meaning to ask you."

"Ask away, then," came the reply. Somehow, Wolf knew he would say that. There was no turning back now.

"What ifâ€¦|someday, you would wake up to find out I was missing?"

_ "Well, I would search all of Cairo, and if I couldn't find you in the infrastructure, then I'll just tear the entire universe until I find you." _

_ Wolf tensed a bit. He was afraid of that. He let his teammate grow too close. _

_ "Listen, Mendez, I want you to promise me something." _

_ "What is it?" _

_ "If there is a morning I'm not here, I want you to promise me that you won't go to extremes to find me. I don't want you doing something that could kill you, get you lost, or anything that could cause the severing of ligaments. Understand?" He tried to make it comical to liven up the situation, but to no avail. _

_ "What are you talking about?" _

_ "Just promise me, OK?" _

_ It took a while for Mendez to weigh the options in his head, or he was probably trying to grasp what he was talking about. Finally, after what seemed an eternity, Mendez finally said, "Yes. I promise." _

_ "Good." They shook hands on it, and Wolf got up from his chair to leave. _

_ "Wait, Wolf," cried Mendez, "what is this for? Is something about to happen?" _

_ "You'll find out soon enough, Mendez," he said, exiting the door as it slid closed behind him. _

That was two years ago. Now Mendez knew why he made him promise. He went missing two days after the next day. Since then, Mendez had been searching the entire galaxy to find out what happened to him. _ If only I didn't throw away that letter, I could've found out what planet he was on, _ he thought, but he knew you can't change the past. It was inevitable.

"I think I'll skip workout today," he said to himself, and headed for the mess hall.

After an hour of mealtime, Mendez went back to his room to prep for bed. He was still recovering from the burnt vegetables from tonight's dinner. Tuesday's Special: Stir Fry and Egg Roll. It was the only meal that the cafeteria staff actually cooked instead of heated in the microwave. Still, it didn't mean that it had to taste good.

It was only 6:00, so he decided to take an extra long shower. He went into the adjoined bathroom connected to his quarters and began to remove the armor piece by piece. When you became a Spartan, the suit practically became a second skin. However, the new models they came

out with came self-operational, which meant that you didn't need help from another human or machine to remove the damned thing. It added a bit of freedom to the owner of the suit. Now, Spartans didn't need a self-cleaning system installed to the suit that would wash your body every 24 hours. The places those washers went to, you'd figure all of the suits were made for women only.

He first took off his helmet, and as he did, he caught a glimpse of his face in the mirror. His ice-blue eyes stared back at him, and it sent a chill down his spine. He always hated his eyes. They seemed to have an eerie aura about them. His brown, wavy hair fluttered with the AC vent, crumpling down since Mendez was right underneath it. Then, his gaze went towards the scar on the right side of his neck. It was a sign of battle. And elite barely made the plasma sword he was wielding fall through, and the tip of the blade just singed through the soft area of his armor, and pierced the soft flesh underneath. His teammates back then called it Heaven's Scar, since it was like a gift from God that he was still alive. Mendez really liked that name. And the fact he was still alive as well.

He then stared at the cobalt armor that covered the rest of his body. He always wondered why Chief Petty Officers were given cobalt armor. Light blue felt fit for rookies. But, he wasn't the one behind ranks. Ever since the Spartan project went public, the Naval Command decided to create color rankings to show status with a Spartan, since their suits didn't work well with holding medals and such. Petty Officers from 3rd to 1st class were given blue armor, Chief Petty Officers, like Mendez, were given cobalt, Master Chief Petty Officers cyan, and, if this were to happen, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy would receive the gold armor. Many saw this as an upgrade in ranks. Mendez thought of it as a cheap way to imitate the Elites. If he could choose what color he wanted, it would be blue with gold. Oh wellâ€¦

He stripped his armor and turned on the shower, stepping into the hot water waiting for him. He let the soothing water cover his entire body, enveloping him into another dimension, as Mendez once again entered deep thought.

Maybe if I had just accepted that memory wipe when Wolf brought me back to the force, then maybe it wouldn't hurt like this, he thought, as he remembered everything: the accident, the trial that followed, and Wolf, who so desperately tried to get a Spartan he never even knew to stay in the Navy. He even said that he would take him into his new squad, since he recently reached the rank of MCPO. After much deliberation, argument, and meetings, the council decided to go with Wolf's suggestion. However, Mendez was put on a restraining order. He would have to go through training again, and he would have to stay at the rank of Chief Petty Officer. He could never go higher than that. Mendez could never leave Wolf's squad, and, when they added more members, and Wolf was found temporarily out of service, Mendez would not be allowed to lead the squad, regardless of if he was the next highest rank. Still, it was better than a life on the streets with no one to turn to. Wolf had saved his life. As Mendez remembered, he cried the rest of the shower away. The bottom of the shower drained more tears than shower water by the time Mendez was through.

As Mendez climbed into bed, he looked at the picture of him and Wolf he hung next to the picture of his previously existing squad, and he

wished that, somehow, Wolf would be on Earth, waiting for him to congratulate him on his mission well done.

"I promised I'd look for you," he said to Wolf's picture, as he stared at his face. It was one of the only pictures Wolf showed his black hair, gray eyes, and growing goatee in photo. He usually could always be seen with his helmet. "I promised, and that is what I will fulfill, even if I'm still searching at the age of 100." He then whispered his silent prayer that he was still alive, reached over, and turned off his lamp, fading the room to completely black.

Somewhere, in the vast universe, floated the remains of the recently destroyed Delta Halo. After Ark was found on Earth, the humans decided that if the Covenant could come to Earth and just remote detonate all of the Halo structures from there, they would destroy the rings to prevent the Covenant from ever trying again. The ring still floated on his vertical axis, but the foundation and infrastructure within could be seen amongst the rubble. Floating alongside this destroyed satellite was the grand city of High Charity, the home base for the Covenant. Inside, the newly-placed Prophets of Envy and Remorse hovered over a display screen within the council room, as they silently discussed their secret experiment.

"How many years has it been since the test subject reached the control area?" asked the Prophet of Remorse, as he stared at what seemed to be a 3D grid of a prison complex with a lone figure outlined by what seemed to be infra-red crouched in a corner.

"Two human years," said the Prophet of Envy, as he brought up statistics of brain levels, heartbeat, thought patterns, and more. They showed differences from when he arrived to now, and they showed what seemed to be chaotic behavior.

"If this experiment goes the way we want it, then we have found a link to getting rid of those wretched humans, restoring the Halos, and once again beginning the Great Journey as our previous leaders tried before us."

"But, it will only begin if this works. So far, the test subject has shown massive changes from his civilized behavior to this more primitive behavior. He eats off the fruit of the land, has destroyed much of his gear he brought with him, even the ship he flew in on, and now, it's time for the final test. We must learn if this isolation and torture have finally taken over him. Have you sent the transmission?"

"The Space Station Cairo should have received the transmission at least 3 hours ago, so the constant should be in place by tomorrow."

"Such pathetic humans. You would think that they would have guessed a second identical transmission smelled of a trap. But, those humans are as dumb as we thought."

"Do you think this experiment will work? The variable we chose had quite the liking to the constant. I do believe he was

hisâ€|captain."

"Trust me, when you find the soft spot of a human's mind, they will do anything for a touch of freedom. Even such a strong subject as this one. Give me his name again. I think we need to give him a call."

"Uhhmâ€|" he looked over the information until it came to the general biography. "Oh, he is Spartan 430, Master Chief Petty Officer Samuel Raenef, aka "Wolf".

Sitting alone in the dark once again, in what seemed a prison block of ancients past, sat a lone Spartan, and crouched in fear of his situation and himself. For two years, he had been stranded on this island, forced to do the Covenant's will, and now his mind was beginning to crack from the stress. With no one to turn to for help, his communications cut off from the world, and the Prophets forcing to do these tests just to gain freedom, he began to lose touch with the reality he was used to. He was adapting, or was he devolving? What were they trying to prove from this experiment? _When am I going to get out of here?_

The prison wasn't very welcoming, either. The walls were all blocked, with no windows except for a sunroof overhead, which was still too high for even a Spartan to reach. There was only one door, and it was sealed off with a door mad of a strange metal that didn't pick up on Wolf's sensors. It would only open when the Prophets wanted them to, and that was when they had a test for him to accomplish. The ground was covered in dirt, as if the Forerunners didn't have enough supplies to make a floor, and it became the most uncomfortable thing to lie on. They were trying to torture him, and he didn't even need to leave his own cell.

There was also a podium of some sorts, with signs of technological advances all over it. It was more advanced than the Forerunner technology, and it had a purple hue, so Wolf knew it was originally placed there by the Covenant. That was a video transmission machine, and that was how the Prophets communicated with Wolf. Wolf despised it, and their company, and always felt like smashing it to bits. But, then, he wouldn't be able to get off this island and find Mendez. _He's got to be so worried about meâ€|_

Suddenly, it flickered to life, and revealed a hologram image of the Prophet of Remorse. Wolf looked up to see the image, and wished the damn thing would blow up.

"Good evening, Wolf. I do presume it is nighttime there, so I shall make this quick so you can get some sleep."

"I wish you would just go away so I could get some sleep, instead of getting nightmares from your ugly head."

"Now, now, that's no way to treat your captors. Besides, we have another test for you."

"Another one of your God damned tests. Great, you guinea-pig is ready."

"Oh don't worry, you won't be our guinea-pig much longer. This will be your final test. If you pass, we will send you home where you belong."

Shock fell on Wolf's face. He was finally going to get out of there. "Mendezâ€|" was all he whispered. He could end his pain once again.

"Now you seem interested."

"Just tell me what it is."

"Well, we are currently sending another Spartan to your island. No doubt he had no idea the so-called Command transmission was a trap."

"Just like you did me, you son-of-a-bitch."

"The test subject should arrive tomorrow. Your mission is to seek him out and kill him using the techniques you have learned during your time on this island. If you succeed, we will grant you your freedom."

"Is that what this was all about? You wanted me to become some cannibal for your entertainment? What, have you rigged this entire island with cameras? Is this your idea of a game?" he yelled at the image, shaking the podium violently.

"That is all for now." And just when Wolf was going to punch the hologram of the head, as if it would hurt him on the other side, the image shut off, leaving Wolf alone once again. He sank to the ground, clutched some dirt, and cried, the tears streaming down the sides of his visor.

"Why?" he whispered, his mind filled with images to kill. 'Why must it be like this? Must I kill to save a life?'

He then rose to the air, spreading hi arms out wide, as if he was asking God to just end it now.

"MENDEEEEEZ!" he yelled to the sky. Yet, he knew very well that in space, no one can hear you scream.

* * *

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_Author's Footnote: _Catchy, huh? You knew it was coming. We're all on the same page here. I know, I love cliffhangers, too, but I promise to have the next chapter up soon, so just review and wait with me.

Signing off,
> GundamFreakX<p>

* * *

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4. Chapter 3 Blinded by the Past

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_Author's Note: _Hey, if you've already read this chapter, then don't worry about rereading it unless you want to know the serious changes with wording. I went back and proofread the whole damn thing. Talk about learning not to type a stoy past 12:00 AM. So, enjoy thisreinstallment, review, and wait for the next installment.

* * *

>Chapter 3

"_Blinded by the Past"_

A soldier learns a new trick the more time he spends in the army. In space, there isn't a sun to signify a new day, and there is no moon to glow in the night. It's just a vast universe of stars and planets alike. To find a way around this, a soldier adapts to a normal schedule of waking and sleeping. For example, if he wakes up at 6:00 sharp over and over again, then the body is triggered to wake at this timeframe, even if he doesn't have an alarm clock. That's how an endless war gets to a soldier. If he wakes up at the same time everyday, even after service, then he remembers his service. He remembers his time in duty and war. A soldier never forgets. They're kind of like elephants, minus the fact that elephants remember migration routes, not memories.

Mendez, of course, always liked an early start for the day anyway, since he always believed that sleeping most of the morning away gets rid of the best part of the day. So, his mental alarm clock always woke him up at 0530 hours military time, so says the clocks on Cairo. He liked this routine of always waking early in the day. Still, he did miss his home planet's two suns. In fact, he lived on one of the days that both suns rose and set at the same time, a phenomenon that only happened every 250 years. In fact, this great sight happened on his last day on Signum Terrian. Although he didn't see it set, he caught both of them rising. Mendez closed his eyes for a few minutes to remember one of the few happy memories he kept.

To think that on the last day he would spend on Terrian before being shipped off to training, he would be able to see the view of a lifetime. That morning, the weather forecaster stated that both of the suns were to rise together that morning before the troops were to be sent out. It was as if the planet was sending a going-away present for the galaxy's future protectors.

_Before Mendez left for the space carrier, Heaven's Cargo, he stared out of his bedroom window, and since it faced the west, he was able to get the best seat in the house. You see, Signum Terrian turns on an opposite axis as Earth. Instead of the sun rising in the east and setting in the west, Terrian's suns did it oppositely. Yet, Earth didn't have two suns to stare at. Terrian was a pacifist planet, so they were never tarnished by war. They never polluted, had most of their electricity come from the water through Hydroelectricity, and

recycled everything as if it were by law. So, their ozone layer could handle the added heat that the sun gave off. It was still a little hot, but that was why Signum Terrian was a tropical climatic planet. No one complained about it, either._

After watching the spectacle he would never see again, he left his room with his belongings and joined his family for a breakfast together. It was a rarity in that house, since the parents were always working. However, today was special. It was Mendez's last day home, and they weren't going to miss it. They fixed Mendez's favorite: Chocolate-chip waffles, whipped cream and maple syrup, cheese grits, link sausage, biscuits, and OJ.

Mendez couldn't help but just stare at his plate. He didn't want to touch his plate. He was wishing this moment would last forever, yet he knew it wouldn't. He wanted to see his family together more, but he knew that it wouldn't happen.

"_What's the matter, big brother?" asked his little sister, Diana, from across the table. He wouldn't be able to see her for a long time, or his parents or his friends or anyone else. They would be gone for a long while, and Mendez would miss them so. He began to cry those silent tears as he tried his best to hide them from his family._

Mendez shook his head. He needed to focus. This mission was important for that missing link in the history of the Forerunners. He needed to put his full attention on the mission ahead, which meant he needed to open his eyes and get out of bed for starters. He rose from his mattress, remade the bed, and began to head to his closet to put his suit back on.

By the time he stepped out of his room to head to the ship that would take him to Earth, it was now 0700. The suit may be easy to take off, but it sure was difficult to put back on. Your skin had to get used to the soft plating that went underneath the actual body armor, and you had to make sure it was put on right. You didn't want the suit lumping in one spot or it feel too tight in another. Skin-tight clothes were always hard to put on, and this work showed that the under armor was no exception. Then, after the under armor was finally in place, perfectly, then you had to lock in the outer armor, the harder material that protected most of the vitals, to the under armor. That was, of course, was a shorter process than the under armor. After all was said and done, he had then put on his helmet, shutting his face from the world once again, and walked out of his room.

He made his way to the shuttle bay to board the Pelican that would take him to Earth. As he walked through the hallway, he glanced at the soldiers and Spartans standing around striking conversations with each other. Most of them, even the Spartans, were of Petty Officer Rate. Only a couple were even 1st class. It was like Cairo was hiring cannon fodder to guard the defenses of Earth. Yet, what they lacked in experience, they had an advantage in numbers. The Covenant war was televised so much, joining in on the fight seemed to become the new fad. Mendez couldn't help but feel sorry for them. He knew that at least half of them would die in combat with the Covenant simply for the fact that they had never seen one, so they wouldn't know what to

expect. If he had authority, he would only let Spartans of high caliber deal with the Covenant. However, he didn't have authority. So, all he could do was sulk.

He finally reached the main service elevator that would take him to the shuttle bay with just the push of a button. It sure did beat taking the stairs instead, since the shuttle bay was fourteen floors below him. Besides, he was in a bit of a hurry. His ETA to the dropship was in just two minutes if he took the elevator. Mendez cursed silently as he pushed the button titled 'Shuttle Bay' and the doors began to close. He blamed his wasted time on memories.

Before the doors shut, he glanced out the crack between the two closing doors. If he hadn't remembered that Wolf was still missing, he would've tried to jump through the doors to get to his long-lost captain_. Damn mirage_, he thought. He shook his head and looked one last time before the doors were completely shut. He was gone.

The elevator began to move its slow descent to the shuttle bay. After about ten seconds, it finally made it to the 12th floor. He was just previously on the 13th, and the shuttle bay was on B1, one floor below the 1st. That meant the elevator would take at least a minute to get there. That meant he was probably going to be late_. Great_, he thought. Mendez began to regret taking the elevator. However, it wasn't because of the time he was losing. It was because of a memory. It was a memory of his first elevator ride here after he was accepted into Wolf's squad as his first official member. Mendez didn't try to get rid of this memory. He let it come full force.

Wolf pushed the button for the 14th floor where Mendez's new quarters were located. ONI even had the courtesy of putting their former criminal next to Wolf's room. They acted as if he needed to be watched by his squad leader 24/7. Although Wolf thought it foolish, he learned not to question Command's actions. Mendez, on the other hand, didn't take Command's order well. Hell, if anyone was in Mendez's boots, who would? It wasn't actually served to him on a silver platter. He turned to see the face of a depressed Spartan staring at the visor of his helmet that he held in his hands.

"I have a few rules that I'm going to establish now that I can lead a squad," Wolf said, hoping Mendez would listen. Mendez cocked his head up and looked at Wolf to show his attention. Wolf looked into Mendez's cold-blue eyes, as if they were screaming. They were bloodshot red. He was trying to hide back tears.

"Well, I'm listening," he replied, jerking Wolf out of Cloud Nine.

"Uhm, right," Wolf said, trying to straighten back up, "anyway, I have three rules so far. First, I do not like rates. You will not call me 'sir'. I find that downgrading. It makes me feel old." He saw Mendez crack a smile. He finally caught his attention. "So instead, we will call each other by our names. I find it more welcoming. For starters," he began, extending his hand, removing his helmet, and revealing his face to Mendez, "I'm Samuel Raenef, but you can call me 'Wolf.'"

_Mendez extended his hand and shook Wolf's. "I'm Jonathan Mendez, and

I prefer Mendez." Mendez smiled. Wolf also smiled, glad that this was helping the current situation. They finally let go, and Wolf continued his monologue of rules._

"Now, here's the other two. Second, when we have meetings or discussions or anything like that, all helmets will be removed. I hate talking to another Spartan and it looks like I'm talking to my reflection. Finally, every month we are to make a status report to ONI."

Mendez lost his cool with the mention of ONI. He had dealt with them enough already. "Great, I bet it's so I don't go on another killing spree, huh?"

"It's nothing like that, Mendez," Wolf said, a little surprised with Mendez's change of attitude. "These are mandatory."

"Bullshit!" Mendez yelled. "Quit lying! I was the same rate as you just three months ago, and I sure as hell didn't have to report every month. Don't tell me another lie!"

"Hold it, Mendez, you need to chill. I'm only taking orders from Command."

"Heh, sure, Command cares. They're probably waiting for the report to say that I'm dead."

"Enough of that, Mendez," Wolf snapped, knowing of Mendez's anger, but thinking it was childish. "Command wouldn't stoop so low."

"Oh, and I'm sure they you enough promotions to say that. How much did they pay you to take me in, huh? Enough to keep your mouth shut about their secret plan to get rid of me?"

Wolf shoved Mendez violently against the wall of the elevator, nearly knocking his head out, as he grabbed his shoulders, shook him violently, and forced his head to look at him. "Now you listen to me, okay? No one ever puts me on the chopping block like that. Got it? I accepted no payment for this, and my promotion was not for this trial. I saved you from living on the streets, and you dare say that about me?" He then stared at Mendez and those cold-blue eyes. Mendez could no longer hide his tears, as they came streaming down his face. It felt like the whole world was about to be consumed by the Great Void. He lost his anger and let go of Mendez's shoulders, backing off to allow Mendez to have some breathing room.

"I-I'm sorry," Wolf said, trying to hold back his own tears.

"Don't be," Mendez said, trying to talk between sobs. "I shouldn't have said that. It's just...just..." he then could no longer hold back, and began to wail his soft agony, sinking to the floor as his legs became weak.

Wolf sank down with him, clutching his frail body in his arms, trying to comfort the weakened soul. "Just let it out, Mendez."

_"Why did I have to kill him? Why did I listen to him? Why, Wolf,

why?"_

"Because you're a good captain, and good captains always listen to what they're teammates have to ask."

_Mendez couldn't help but feel a little better with that. At least somebody agreed with his actions. Wolf was a first. _Maybe this won't be so bad after all, _he thought, finally getting up from his saddened stupor. Wolf helped him up, grabbing one of his arms, making sure it wasn't the left arm, and pulled him up._

"Thanks, Wolf," Mendez said, as the elevator finally reached the fourteenth floor.

Mendez's elevator finally reached shuttle bay. _That was forever, _he thought, sniffing in a sob as he walked out of the tiny cubicle transporter. His ship that would transport him straight to Earth was all decked and ready for take-off. The Pelican ship, _Grand Inferno, _wasn't much of a ship. It was made during the era of Master Chief, so it didn't have all of the technological advances that today's Pelicans have. Still, it could get you from A to B. Besides, the current pilot of the ship, Captain Harold Seinsburg of the Marines, bought it himself, saying that such a treasure shouldn't be trashed. He kept up with its repairs, paid them himself, and flew the thing a lot, since he was a well-respected captain. In fact, Mendez had this captain specifically chosen for his solo mission drop-off.

He walked towards the ship. The captain and his co-pilot, Corporal Gerald Hines, who noticed his arrival, quickly got up from their seats outside the ship to get Mendez prepped and ready.

"How's it going, son?" said Seinsburg. He was a pretty old guy, and had the rough accent to back up his age, so Mendez was immediately reminded of his great companion's attitude when he heard those words: kind and straight-forward. "Ready for your trip?"

"Yes sir, as long as my weapons are onboard."

"You know our policy, Mendez," Hines said, "'You order, we deliver.'"

"Well, I should've remembered that."

"Don't worry about it. Just load up, and we can get you on your way," Seinsburg replied, heading towards the ship's docking hatch.

Mendez couldn't argue with that logic. He climbed onboard, strapped into one of the seats located behind the pilot's chamber, and gave a thumbs-up through the window to signify he was ready. The pilot waved back after he and his co-pilot were ready, telling flight control that the ship was set for leave. The lead flight-controller gave the OK to commence take-off as the docking bay doors opened to reveal the planet Earth below them. The ship wheeled forward, ever faster, before finally flying out of Cairo on its way to the Caspian Sea.

Wolf woke up that morning to what would hopefully be the last sunrise he would see on that island. It seemed to have a blood-red color to it, as if the world was preparing for Wolf's kill. And what a kill it would be. Wolf thought about it all night. He would follow his victim's footsteps for a long while, and make it seem that he was alone on the island. He would make his best to make his location unknown to his victim. It would make him lose his guard. He would get comfortable. He would begin to lower his gun and put it away when he believed there would be nothing to worry about. And as soon as he thought he was alone...Wolf silently laughed at the thought of it. He would capture him, take him back to this bloody cell he has called home for two freaking years, and murder the man right in front of his Covenant audience. Then, they wouldn't have a reason to find an explanation to keep him here longer. He wanted off of this vile island, and he would do whatever it takes to leave, to get back to where he belonged, to get back to Mendez...

He jolted awake when the hologram projector lit up. It revealed the Prophet of Envy this time. Wolf had learned the difference between the two. They had different "antlers", Remorse being with square tips and a green jewel in the middle of the helmet on his head, and Envy having a blue jewel and triangular tips. Either way, he despised both of them, and vowed to kill them both if they were ever to meet in person.

"Good morning, Wolf," he said, in his usual raspy voice that sounded he had finally kicked the bucket and came back. Wolf never grew tired of hearing it.

"What do you want?"

"To inform you that your prey is on its way to the island. You'll have your chance to get off of this prison soon enough."

The Pelican was now beginning to make its descent. The co-pilot, Hines, made his way to the back with Mendez to keep him company, probably because he had never seen a real Spartan up close before. Yet, Mendez couldn't help but sense a bit of anger from him.

"Is there something wrong, Hines?" he asked, needing to know if there was anything he needed to clear up.

"Nothing you can fix, sir," Hines said empathetically.

"I take it you have something against us."

"Not much, except for your excuse for using your power on us."

"Abuse..." Mendez whispered to himself. He had heard of it before. Some Spartans saw their new-found abilities as a way to manipulate those who decided not to take part in Project MJORLINR. It seemed that it would happen during the experiment process that something would trigger inside their brain. Something that envied power over weaklings. Many Spartans were able to beat this feeling, but some didn't. Those would sometimes have to be decommissioned from the UNSC. When Mendez was Master Chief Petty Officer, he had to do that a

few times before.

"Listen, I know how bad that stuff is, but I promise you I would never do such a thing. That's vile and not understandable. I wish that you could just trust me on that."

Hines thought about it, but eventually let in. "I trust you, but only because you and the boss are friends. That, however, doesn't mean I have to like you."

Mendez still let off a sigh of relief, knowing he could understand that not all Spartans were cold, heartless maniacs.

"Hey," Hines yelled to Seinburg, trying to change the subject, "are we close enough to turn on some radio?"

"Yeah, just let me turn it on!" he yelled from the cockpit, flicking on a switch that temporarily sent some static through the ship's sound system. Then, they began to hear someone's voice.

"...listening to Military Time Radio, keeping our soldiers entertained. Our top story today, 'Copy or Casualty?' The Army has just unveiled a project they've been keeping under wraps for sometime these past few years, but have now gone public with this new development of soldiers now that the project is nearing completion. Codenamed TROJANS, these 'super-soldiers' will be the Army's next-generation of combative force to protect the homeland. In a recent interview with..."

Mendez sat stunned at what he was listening to. TROJANS? Why did that sound like blackmail?

"I take it you haven't been keeping up with the news," Hines said, sensing the surprised expression on Mendez's face. Mendez nodded. "Well, I think it's a horrible excuse for saying, 'Hey, Navy, we're jealous of your newfound fame with your Spartans, so we're going to make our own Spartans, but we'll just call them TROJANS'. You want to see what they look like? Seinburg, pull it up on the hologram projector!"

Mendez couldn't wait to see this excuse for a copycat as the hologram projector sitting in the middle of the passenger room lit up with a 3D rendered image of the interview. They were currently talking about the specs of these new soldiers, but Mendez wasn't paying the spokesman any mind. He was catching a view at these new soldiers. They were pretty amazing. They were as tall as a Spartan, as fit as a Spartan, but most of all...

"They look just like a Spartan!" he yelled, as he noticed that their armor looked exactly like a Spartan's does.

"Not exactly," Hines said. "Take a look at their helmet."

Mendez observed their helmets. They had what seemed to be a visor there, but the helmet was shaped different. It seemed to have a round top, and a bit tall for a normal human's head. It seemed that two edges extended out of the chin in a curved structure with two more edges at the back. At the top of the helmets, however, were what seemed to be an extended bulbous section at the top of the helmet. It

reminded Mendez of the brush on top of a Spartan's helmet.

"So, they don't pull blackmail on the Army because they have a different helmet as ours. Great," he said, turning it off because he was fed up with it.

"Oh, don't worry about those god-damned TROJANS," Hines said. "They're nothing but cheap copies of the real thing. They won't last long."

"Heads up!" Seinburg yelled from the front, "ETA in 15 minutes!"

They both braced the sides of the seats as they entered Earth's atmosphere. Mendez always hated this part. At least it wasn't as bad on Earth as it was on other planets he visited. The bumpy ride, the overheat of the ship, the "Butterflies in your Stomach" routine, the works...everything about entering a planet's atmosphere made it the worst part of the trip. Once the ship got used to the gravity change, however, it became smooth again.

"I'm afraid we have to turn around here, Mendez, so you'll have to take an HEV pod the rest of the way down."

"Oh."

"Nothing personal, Mendez. We're just worried what happened to Wolf will happen to us. They guessed that a smaller vessel than the one Wolf was operating should get the job done."

"You've got two mintues!" Seinburg said, "So, get your gear and get inside the pod so Hines can drop ya."

Mendez made his way to the small weapon rack located next to the cockpit and picked up the necessities: M90 Shotgun, his preferred weapon, SMG, his backup, M67 Fragmentation Grenades, a safety pack, included first-aid kit, extra ammo, satchel, flashlight, flare gun, and fire-starter kit. He felt like he was going camping in Area 51. He then walked to the back of the Pelican and sat in one of the HEV pods. As the flexi-glass shut in front of him, he turned his head to see Hines at the release panel.

"Just phone Command if you have any trouble down there," he said, lifting his hand to his forehead, fingers locked together, and quickly bringing them back down as fast as they came up. Mendez saluted back. Then, he pressed the 'Release' button, sending Mendez on his long fall to his first visit on Earth.

Wolf felt the tingle in the back of his head, an uneasiness in the air, a bit of vertigo at the moment. His prey was near. His time of redemption was nigh. The Prophets had provided Wolf with his long-forgotten weapon just in case he needed to use it. His preferred chioce:BR55 Rifle. Fully loaded and a great midrange and close range weapon. He loved the feel of it in his hand. He missed the feel of its recoil as he would shoot his enemies down one by one. Now, he would get that chance again. He picked up his weapon, cocked it ready, and waited for his cell door to open, so the predator could go and hunt his prey.

Mendez's HEV pod came crashing down on the soft sand of the beach south of the island. He kicked open the door since it seemed to jam at the landing. He reached for his shotgun and quickly surveyed his surroundings. Moving his head from left to right, he found nothing in sight, but refused to put his gun away. He could see the great, looming structure reach as far as the clouds in the sky. That seemed to be the thing with the Forerunners. All of their structures seemed to go beyond normal heights. Sometimes, he wished they were Acrophobic like he was. He began to walk towards the structure to begin to put his training in Forerunner language to good use when he stumbled on a piece of rubble. It was steel, with what seemed to be white numbering on it. It looked like...

"A piece of a ship..." he said, picking it up, studying it. Suddenly sensing the realization of the situation, he dropped the piece of metal. "Wolf!" he yelled, following the debris. He began to run, hoping there was some tiny probability that his leader was still alive from the crash he was about to find.

Wolf felt the presence on the island. He began to inch towards the door. He began the vision he saw in his head last night. _Follow, find, break, kill..._ he repeated over and over again in his head. The thought of finally being able to go home had left his mind entirely. Now, all he could think about was who was waiting for him back on Cairo..._Mendez, I do this for you._

Mendez stood in shock at the crash site in front of him. Pieces of the ship lied everywhere. Electrical lines from the ship's power room lay amuck. He then looked at the giant, gaping hole in the side of the ship. It was very old, yet at the very edges, it still glowed a hint of purple.

"Plasma fire?" he asked himself. Then, he figured it out.
"Covenant..."

He then felt something wrong, and turned around to see a startling sight...footprints. Wolf must've survived the crash. _Oh my God, he's still here. Where is he? Is he alive? Is he..._

"WOOOOOLF!" he yelled to the sky, hoping that he could hear him, if his soul had not reached heaven yet.

The door finally opened. The hunt was to begin. Wolf was ready. He could taste victory. He could practically hear his prey call his name..._Wolf...Wolf...Wooolf..._

"Let the games begin," he said, grabbing his gun and exiting to the outside world, his mind set on the task ahead.

* * *

>Author's Footnote: **Well, it's a cliffhanger. Deal with it! You'll be on your seat for a while, but don't worry for too long. I'll have the next chapter up soon. Until then, review.

Signing off,
> GundamFreakX<p>

* * *

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5. Chapter 4 Temptation to Kill

Chapter 4
>"_Temptation to Kill_"

No answer came from his cry, and Mendez feared the worst. Could after all these years, after all of his searching, it would come to this? Would he find his captain, the man that saved him from an eternity of suffering, dead?

_No! _he yelled in his mind. It was not over. He just arrived on the island, and he didn't even know the layout of it. If he was going to succeed in his mission, and find Wolf, he needed to know what to look out for. That was one of the main tactics they taught you back at training. They practically beat it into you, so it was pretty much hard to forget. In fact, anything you learned in training was hard to forget, since it kept you alive.

He began to look around, catching a glimpse of the rest of the island. It seemed to be nothing but sand and dirt, and there wasn't any other mass of land for what seemed to be miles. The horizon was nothing but sky, clouds, and water. A few mounds of dirt were here and there. Smack-dab in the middle of the island, though, was the Forerunner structure. At least he landed where he was supposed to. Yet, Wolf's ship was here, too. That had to mean Wolf was sent on the same mission as well. But, why? And was there a connection? Why would Command send him if they had lost a Spartan to this island already? And furthermore, how did Wolf's ship get shot down, anyway? There were no defense turrets to be seen anywhere. This place was a deserted island fit for pacifists. Yet, there was Wolf's ship next to Mendez in ruins.

Mendez realized that he wouldn't be able to deduce anything if he didn't move around the island. So, he headed straight for the looming Forerunner building ahead of him. With all of these clues coming together, he wondered if this was even a Forerunner structure in the first place.

Unbeknownst to Mendez, another life was on that same island as him. This other organism, about 20 meters away, was lying low to the ground, hoping to not attract attention to his prey. He tried to keep his breath to a minimum, taking small, irregular breaths, so his body would not rise as often as his diaphragm. His BR55 Battle Rifle sat comfortably in his hands: his left hand holding the gun steady, with a little help from a bipod attachment, his right hand on the trigger.

With only a 2x scope as his zoom-in function, his best chance of making the target's head from this distance were slim. However, he wasn't going to kill his target from here. Such an advantage over his prey would be soâ€|boring. He wanted a challenge, and he wanted this one alive. The Prophets wouldn't turn down a kill performed right in front of them, live, up-close, and personal. They would be impressed, give him his ship, and he could be off this god-forsaken island by sundown. All he needed was his victim. With his eyes set on the goal, Wolf began to make a slow crawl towards Mendez, unaware of his prey, but aware of the kill.

The foundation that stood in the middle of the island was an amazing thing of work. It was long and wide, with a few rooms Mendez couldn't identify any meaning to, but its biggest asset was the great, looming aperture jutting from the front of the building, and extending towards the sky, as if it thought it could reach that far. He couldn't help but wonder what was with the dizzying height. Was it a beacon of some sorts? Who knows, but Mendez was growing impatient. Hell, for all he knew, it could be just for show, and this whole building could be a bunch of bologna.

_What if I have come all this way for nothing? _He thought, stomping the surrounding sand with his footâ€|and wondering why his foot didn't go through. Sand is supposed to move around your foot, but Mendez's boot was still clearly visible. That was strictly impossibleâ€|unless there was another element that lay underneath the sand.

Mendez began to dig through the sand, hoping there was something there to answer his question. He didn't have to dig for long, as the sand level was thinner than he thought. His theory was correct. Lying underneath the sand was a metal alloy sheet, matching in color and pattern to the Forerunner structure.

He then developed a new theory as he began to dig in a line from the spot he was at to the Forerunner structure. It took a while, with the sun beginning to set when he finally reached the building, but it was soon obvious what this island was: artificial. The metal substance extended from the building all the way to where Mendez had dug before. The whole island must have been like that. Could this whole island had been made by the Forerunners? And better still, what was this particular structure for?

He then lay down on the sand and placed his ear against the metal underneath the sand. He was trying to hear something, but he didn't know what. He found it though, as a low whirring sound came from underneath. It had to have been an energy source. That could only mean that this building was a weapon. But why would the Forerunners build a weapon on Earth?

_Maybe they were afraid that the Flood would reachâ€|_he began to hypothesize, but his thoughts trailed away. He suddenly began to feel woozy. It felt like a great void was sucking him in. His queasiness intensified when he tried to turn around. He decided not to turn around, afraid of what he might see. He tried to figure out what was going on. _Am I being watched? Is someone here? _His thoughts became more rapid as his adrenaline began to reach a critical point. Then a million actions began to whisper in his mind. _Runâ€|turn

aroundâ€|say somethingâ€|pull out your gunâ€|_until one action finally roared in his head like the cry of a lion: _DUCK! _And so he arched his upper body back, and turned his head to the sky as he watched three bullets rush past where his stomach once was.

_Damnâ€|_Wolf thought, as he aimed his gun down some, so he could try to shoot his target again. He needed this one alive, yes, but he didn't want this to last forever. He saw his opponent's head turn towards him, and he felt the fear from his victim. He was about to fire, but then his adversary flipped backwards, and Wolf missed once again. _Damn itâ€|_ he thought as he tried to keep up with his rapid movement.

Mendez landed back on his feet, but soon had to roll to his left as his attacker fired his three-bullet attack once again. _This guy won't let me even stand stillâ€|_he thought, pulling out his M90 Shotgun, _so negotiation won't work here. _He then twirled his body to the right, dodging another firing round, and extended his arm towards where the bullets came from, and fired. However, his bullets hit nothing but the side of the structure. _Aw man, that would've killed him._

_Damn, _Wolf thought, as he looked back at where he was previously standing to his right, and saw the two gaping holes from his opponent's Shotgun, _that would've killed me. _He then began to run in a semicircle and fired multiple rounds, trying to calculate where his opponent would move next, but failing miserably. _How could he know where I am firing? _He yelled to himself, as he watched him dodge left, roll right, flip back, and several other moves.

"Why don't you just keep still?" he yelled, continuing he constant shooting.

_As if he expects me to answer him, _he thought, continuing to dodge bullet after bullet. He didn't know where this guy was going to shoot next, so he just decided to dodge blindly. He knew, however, that this was going to hurt him if he didn't get the upper hand soon. He then turned towards his opponent after a twirl-around and fired his Shotgun. His opponent jumped out of the way, though, as he threw his body to his left, and then began to fire more bullets as he flew off from his standing spot. Mendez flipped back to try and dodge these bullets, but his attacker had fired at the ground, and the last of the semi-fire rounds had caught him in his no-gun hand. As his lower body fell back to the ground, he clutched his right hand, and felt the blood flow from his wound. _I guess my shield isn't workingâ€|_he thought, as he winced from the sharp jolt of pain emanating from his hand.

Wolf knew that last one got him as he crashed to the sand. He got

back up and saw his opponent distracted by his wound. He made a split-second decision and began to run towards him, ready to bash his gun against his head, which would knock him out and end this.

Mendez felt his opponent rush forward and only had two seconds to react. Once again, that voice in his head yelled at him with one word: DUCK! So, he did, arching his upper body back again, but this time, he watched a gun fly past where his head was. So, this guy wants to go melee nowâ€¦ he thought, as he pulled his left leg forward in a front kick motion. His opponent grabbed it, but then Mendez flung his body to the left, extending his right leg out to hit his side. As his body began to fall, he heard the thud from his foot hitting the side of his rib cage. Contact, he thought, as he leveled his hands with his body, which caught it once they hit ground. Ignoring the strain on his right hand, he pushed his body back upward, grabbing his fallen shotgun to his left and pointed towards his left and fired. His opponent dodged, but one second too late, as one of the bullets caught him on his right side. If Mendez had fired both into him, this fight would've been over now. Still, he got lucky even more, as his opponent did have shields up.

Shields? He questioned. Now that he thought about it, he never had a chance to even look at his opponent. So, he turned his head to where the other had stumbled. Then, his eyes went wide. Another Spartan?

Wolf sensed his opponent's tension. He should've known. Wolf was pretty sure his opponent had no idea that he had been sent to his death by the Covenant. As he clutched his side, he wondered how much longer this was going to take. The sun was almost gone, and the light would soon be gone. He had to finish this now. Ignoring the pain, he clenched his gun handle and ran straight for him. He had to knock this guy out, he'd never get off of this island. He was sure the Covenant would think of some excuse not to let him go if he didn't kill this guy right in front of them. He needed him alive, just not moving for awhile.

Mendez felt the wound on his hand getting to him. His vision was beginning to clog from the loss of blood. Still, his vision wasn't foggy enough to see the other Spartan run straight at him. He needed to act now. He turned left, and he felt the wind of a hand with a gun rush past him. That hit would've been hard. He then ran forward towards the building, ran up the sides, and flipped back. He went right over his opponent and looked down at where he was standing. He fired his Shotgun, but didn't make contact this time. When he landed, a side kick was waiting for him, as the Spartan's foot hit him right in the abdomen. The impact sent him flying backwards, and he barely caught his footing. As he regained his composure, he lifted his hands up to block from another kick, and another, and another. This guy won't quit! _

He then ducked under another kick and jumped over, side-flipping his body over his opponent. For a moment, he glanced at the clouds above

him. He wondered if he would see them again after this day. He wanted to, so this battle would be his. Once he landed, he turned his body left and aimed his Shotgun atâ€|nothing. _Where did he go?_ Mendez quickly got up and tried to look around for his attacker. However, he found out where he was the hard way, as a sudden sharp pain went through his abdomen. Three bullets then rushed past through his body. The pain was excruciating. He dropped to his knees and fell to the sand below him. The pain grew to catastrophic intensity. _Damn it, I knew I should've brought my shield capabilities along.

—

Wolf finally had him down, with only two seconds of light left, as the sun finally set on the horizon. A few more minutes of this battle would have been the life of him. However, his opponent was down for the count. Still, he could hear groans coming from him, so that meant he was still alive. He thought it best to knock him out, so he won't try to fight back when he would drag the body back to the complex.

He staggered for a moment. He was finally going to get off of this god-damned island, and he go back to Cairo and he could find Mendez and tell him he was still alive. All he needed was this frail body's head on a platter for the Covenant. As he cocked his foot back, he whispered, "For Mendezâ€|"

_Did he just sayâ€|my name? _he thought. It had to have been. _Could this be_â€| he tried to think, but was cut short to a powerful kick to the back of his head, turning his world black.

6. Chapter 5 Revelation

Chapter 5**

>_"Relevation"_

_Smokeâ€|fireâ€|a broken ship, crashed upon the desolate surface of a planet, long deserted, and long forgottenâ€|signs and evidence of Covenant fire and warfareâ€|dead Spartans mangled with the wreckageâ€|and their captain, the lone survivor, wedged between two pieces of the shipâ€|all of this and more equal one hell of a bad day for Master Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Mendez. _

When he first woke up to immediate darkness, he thought his soul had been sent to the cold confines of hell, but when he heard the crackling of fire, and felt the pain in his left shoulder, he realized this was all reality, and wished it was really hell instead. Giving it all his might, he pushed up on the giant ship metal that blocked him from getting back up again. After a couple of tries, he finally made it budge, and the rest of it came sliding off.

_It took him a few minutes to regain his composure, but after his vision became used to the hot, burning sun of the desert-planet of Octanus VI, he prayed to God he was having a nightmare. He began to survey the layout of the situation, and could come up with one observation: ambush. The purple hue of Covenant weapon-fire still glowed upon the remaining pieces of Amistad, his squad's main mode of

transportation across any planet, and his team was now gone. There were no signs of other life anywhere. Why was it only him that survived? _Why couldn't I die instead? _He thought, looking towards the sky for answers. God must've left this planet years ago, though, for the look of things. And now, he was all alone, on a deserted planet, with no human life whatsoever. _

But then, he heard something. Distant at first, but it rose to cacophonous levels. Mendez realized he hearing was fully healing, for he heard the sound's direction now, as he turned around to see what it was and wished he could drop dead on the spot.

Mendez woke up abruptly from the same nightmare he has feared for more than two years now, and began to slowly rise from his dirt pad? _Since when has Cairo went natural environmental? _He thought, as he lifted his body off of what he thought was his bed, but he soon realized he was no longer on Cairo. He was in some sort of cell. It was very small, and it had no furniture in it. It was nothing but three walls, a caged door, and dirt. He stood up and walked to the caged door and looked around. In fact, the surrounding building he was in didn't look too fancy itself, as if he was in the cell of the cell. The walls were black and morbid-looking, as if they had never been touched in centuries. He did notice an odd-looking device in the center of the room, but that was the only stand-out piece in the entire room. When his diluted vision cleared up, he noticed light extending from the ceiling, and found that there was a hole at the top, where he could see the night sky.

_Night sky? How can that be? It was just the afternoon? _His thoughts trailed off as he remembered the earlier events that took place: the landing, the wreckage, and the struggle for life. And, his opponent, which happened to not be in the room. _He must've dropped me in here and left, _he concluded, wondering how that was possible, since there seemed to be no way out of this room, so his attacker would have to be down here as well.

Then, he saw the door at the far end of the room. It was shut, but Mendez thought it had to have been controlled by that device in the middle of the room. _Must've stepped out or something? _He began to think, but suddenly, he felt a cold chill run down his back. It was that same feeling he felt before his recent quarrel, but without such intensity. Now, he felt like he was just being watched. Then, he looked up, and saw another Spartan at the top of the ceiling, looking down at him from the hole in the roof. Since he could actually stand still for a few seconds, he sized up this second member of the island. He seemed to be a high-status Spartan, wearing the teal armor of a Master Chief Petty Officer, but it was covered in dirt and forest stains, scratched, and bent in numerous places. _He's been here for awhile. _His stance was of the tall, attentive one, as taught in all boot camps, but it seemed to slack a bit, and his arms were lowered to his sides, which Mendez noticed one of them carried a gun. He seemed to have been away from military action and customs for so long, his body became used to a state of fear and anger.

This Spartan then jumped down from the ceiling and into the room with Mendez. Landing with knees bent and upper body close to the ground, the ground seemed to shake when he planted his feet to the ground. He

stayed that way for a couple of seconds before finally rising up, revealing his height, which was a few inches taller than Mendez.

Mendez suddenly felt foolish for standing too long, unarmed, in an enemy's presence. His hand twitched as he felt the familiar urge to move his hand towards his shotgun. It felt so familiar to him, for that's how he got himself out of dire situations. That great call towards his savior, an M90 Shotgun, was all too familiar. _Wait, _he spoke to himself, his hand reaching for his weapon of choice. _Delicate, delicateâ€|NOW! _He jerked his left hand to his right side, where he kept the holster for his shotgun. The holster was there, waiting for him with open armsâ€|but the houseguest was not present. His shotgun was missing. He looked towards his hand to make sure he didn't miss, but his thoughts were correctâ€|his shotgun was gone!

_How? _He then jerked up, and looked towards his caper, but he could no longer see him. He now stared down the barrelâ€|of HIS shotgun. He had been confiscated. He should've guessed. Why would his attacker still leave him armed? Mendez should've known he wasn't that stupid. After all, on the other end of that shotgun was a soldier well-trained in operating weaponry like that. Not just a soldier, eitherâ€|but a Spartan. But why?

"Don't get any funny ideas," he said, inching the barrel ever so closer to the visor of Mendez's helmet. Mendez was glad he had a visor, because he sure as hell didn't want to stare directly at his own shotgun. _Now I know how the Covenant feel when I'm about to pull the trigger. _

"I-Iâ€|," he tried to speak, but words could not form. His tongue was dry, and his throat was clogged with spit forced down with effortless gulping. He wished he could return to his calm state of mind and remember his training on how to remove fear. Yet, they never taught how to hide fear from a treacherous teammate pointing your own weapon at your temple. He sure did wish he had, though, for it wouldn't be long before Mendez would have the urge to soil his under armor.

"Not so tough now your lifeline is under my control, huh?" his enemy questioned.

_No shit, Sherlock. Not everyone can stare at a shotgun barrel and laugh at danger at the same time. _Silence filled Mendez's lips.

Then, the other Spartan began to mumble to himself, as he turned and headed for the contraption at the end of the room. They were barely above a whisper, but Mendez could hear it as clearly as a normal conversation. He had to thank the experimentation process for his upgraded senses.

"â€|everything's going great. Just like I thought. I can get off this god-damned island, and I can go back to Cairo. God, I hate this place. I hope I never have to come back here again. Ooh, the Covenant will enjoy me killing him in front of them. Like watching Saturday-morning cartoons. I wonder if Mendez will remember meâ€|"

The words just trailed off from there. Mendez became confused. No one

cared for him in his whole life, especially after his incident on Octanus VI. No one, exceptâ€|suddenly, Mendez's mind entered a stage of vertigo, as it seemed his vision became tunneled, and the sides just faded into fuzziness. At the center, though, where he could see clearly, was the other Spartan. The words carried through his mind. They drove him mad with an all-destructive confusion over who this Spartan was. Then, a memory came. It came like a flash of thunder: quick and painless, but with all of the information he needed.

Blackâ€|but not that normal black, where it's nothing but endless shadow, and you can't even see two inches in front of your faceâ€|no, this one had tiny shapes to itâ€|grains of sand. Mendez realized he was on the ground, his face buried in the sand.

He tried to get up, but a sharp pain jolted him to a stop. It came from his abdominal area. It felt like bullet wounds, but his mind was in a flurry of homeostatic imbalance. As he tried to gather his thoughts, he heard someone above him say some words. The voice had a hint of familiarity to it, but Mendez couldn't pinpoint exactly why that voice clicked in his mind. He blamed it on his pain. However, the words he heard were the true jab in the chest, for they touched him where no bullets could trigger: his heart.

"For Mendezâ€|""

That had to be the same guy that said it. The armor color was all too familiar, even though Mendez did move around a lot throughout the recent battle. It had to be recent, since there was still a hint of the sun's glow in the star-filled sky above him. His mind was now flooded, as the vertigo became even stronger, for now, Mendez knew who it was. It had to be him. It had to beâ€|

"Wolf."

Whatever he was doing, the other Spartan stopped moving entirely. Mendez's mind cleared of the vertigo, and he grabbed the helmet where he would normally grab his forehead, because now his head felt like it was in the process of a migraine. His eyes squinted, as the pain grew gradually worse. Finally, after about a few seconds, his head began to heal. He was finally able to open his eyesâ€|and saw the helmet of the other Spartan right in his face. Mendez threw himself back in surprise. _Keep it under control, _he thought.

The other Spartan grabbed a hold of the handle bars and slid the door to the left, opening the passageway for his entrance. He stepped forward, closer to Mendez, and pointed the shotgun back to his abdomen. "How did you know my name?" His words came as an order, but Mendez sensed a state of confusion and shock in his voice. There now was no doubt. He was Wolf. Now, all he had to do was convince Wolf not to kill him. What a great way to spend the night on a new island.

Mendez now had to find the courage to confront the madman he knew as leader, and friend. But how? Mendez thought it over in his head. _Wolf, listen. It's me, Mendez. No, uhm, bad idea. It would be better

slowly. Let's seeâ€¦ Wolf, I know this will be hard to believe, butâ€¦Nuh-uh, that's not gonna work. What do I say? Uh-__

"Answer me!" he yelled, jamming the shotgun into Mendez's stomach. He felt the pain intensify from that jab, for the wound from the bullets was still fresh. He had to say something, or he would definitely be killed. "How do you know my nickname?"

_Say something, dammit! _"Wolf, it's me, Mendez."

The pushing from the shotgun eased as he felt it being pulled away. Mendez wished he could see Wolf's face, since someone's face tells all thoughts. Yet, the stillness of Wolf's body showed that he was thinking. But about what?

Then, Wolf reacted. For every action, there is an equal, yet opposite reaction. Sir Isaac Newton couldn't have been more right. This reaction was definitely oppositeâ€¦ opposite of what Mendez expected. This world sure is unscripted. Wolf reacted violently. He lifted the shotgun in a quick motion of his right arm arching sideways to behind his back.

"LIAR!" he yelled, swinging the shotgun into the side of Mendez's head. The force sent Mendez flying to the right side of the cage, his body bouncing back off of the wall, now cracked from the impact.

Mendez's body was being pushed to the limit. He couldn't suffer through another beating. Not this soon after the first fight with Wolf. Dizzy from his fall, he did not notice Wolf came up to where Mendez crashed. Wolf reached down and grabbed Mendez around his throat and lifted him off the ground.

"How dare you try to make that up?" Wolf yelled, punching Mendez in the other side of the face. He must have thrown the shotgun, since Mendez heard clanking noises in the background. _Wow, it's amazing what you notice when you're near death, _he thought.

"Wolf, please," he begged, "you have to believe me."

"ENOUGH!" Wolf cried, throwing Mendez down on the ground. When Mendez landed, Wolf crushed his head with his foot. The pain was excruciating, as Mendez's body felt like it was giving up, for he became numb in certain areas. He tried to raise his body, but the pain had consumed his nerves, and every move of a muscle felt like daggers piercing his flesh, and he arched back in pain. So, Wolf did the job for him, turning Mendez over and forcing his foot into Mendez's throat.

How much more can I take?

Wolf leaned down and grabbed his Battle Rifle that he had hung in his holster. He then pointed it into Mendez's visor. His body was shaking, and Mendez could feel it. He was angry, and this anger was out of control. Mendez could begin to see his life flash before him, fearing his time was up. He had to do something.

"Please!" he cried, "I'll do anything. I'll do anything to prove to you I am Mendez. Just give me a chance!"

Now, God works in mysterious ways. He performed miracles in the Bible times, and he still does today, just in small increments. It could be a return of your wallet with all of the money that was in it. Or, it could be someone who helps you get out of trouble. For Mendez, it was Wolf giving Mendez a chance to talk. Wolf removed the Rifle, but did not move an inch. It was already hard for Mendez to talk with all of the pain. Adding a foot in his throat just made it worse.

"Fine," Wolf said, "I'll give you a chance. You're going to tell me something only the real Mendez would know. If you say it correctly, then I will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are Mendez. If you don't, there will be pieces of brain scattered all over this cell."

Mendez couldn't argue with that logic. Either talk or die. It sounded pretty easy. But, what was he going to have Mendez say?

"If you are Mendez, you can tell me, in every detail, what happened three years ago on Octanus VI. Tell me the reason why you were tried for court martial and I had to save your precious ass."

Mendez's heart stopped dead-cold. His pain no longer mattered, for the memory of what happened was what always killed him. What happened that day was kept under confiscation, and never mentioned outside of that courtroom. No wonder he asked Mendez to do that. No other Spartan would know. Yet, it jerked him. Why would Wolf force him to do this? Did he really not believe he was Mendez?

"But, that's classified," came the words that always came out when someone would ask about the incident. It was impulse, but this was definitely not the time for it. Not with an angry Spartan about to kill you.

"I know, which is why only Mendez and I know it, since we were the only Spartans that attended that court reading. Now, tell me, or else."

There was no backing out now. Wolf forced the gun in Mendez's stomach, urging him to hurry up and tell him, or death was upon him.

"All right, I'll talk. I'll tell you," he said, tears beginning to form. It was what needed to be done. He was just glad that Wolf at least got up and gave him some breathing room. Mendez slowly raised his upper body, his lower body still on the floor, and stared at Wolf. He gave off no body language to show Mendez what he was feeling. This confused Mendez, but he needed to concentrate on his story if he wanted to tell it one-hundred percent. He closed his eyes, fading his world to black, and looked back to three years ago on the one choice that would change his life.

"It began as just a covert mission," he said, "you know, just a pass-over on the planet. I never knew it wouldn't end that way." Soon, he began to see the horrifying pictures that plagued his dreams, his voice became clogged. It was such a burden to carry the life on your shoulders.

* * *

>**_Author's Note: _**OMG, man! This has got to be, like, my biggest absence from Fanfiction ever. I can blame it on MySpace, too! Oh well, as for the update, I'm sorry I haven't had time to give notes on the story. I've only had time to just post them on here. I can't blame that on MySpace, but I CAN blame it on work and school. So there! Anyway, Chapters 4 and 5 were a bit short, but they both lead up to what happened in Mendez's past that got him to where he is today. Well, guess what? Chapter 6 is all about that memory, and it's in the memory format that you probably all know and hopefully tolerate. And so, without further ado, here is Chapter 6 of We Are Spartans.

* * *

>Chapter 6
 "_Silent Memoir"_

Amistad was a fine ship. It was one of the finest Pelican ships in the fleet Master Chief Petty Officer Mendez commanded. With his crew of five Spartans, two pilots, and a Pelican-load of cargo stored near the docking bay, mostly of guns and ammo, this ship had gone through quite a bit of wear and tear to get the respect it so rightfully deserved.

As it flew above the desert sands with the speeds of the light, making the particles of dirt dance, the crew sat around, waiting for when this covert mission was over. It seemed like the same routine everyday: wake up, get geared up, get in the ship, fly over the same desert sands, and grow old. Even Mendez could tell everyone missed the action when the Covenant was still putting up a sizeable fight since they had destroyed the rings. They missed the rarely-missed Covenant plasma fire, the thrill of throwing an Elite off of his Ghost and retaliating at the unexpected forces with their own medicines, and saving humanity, one Grunt at a time, not with one flyover a time.

"Who bets that we'll have to do this tomorrow?" screamed 2nd Class Petty Officer Billy Hutch, the average country boy from the south-side of Texas, over the sound of the engines. That Western accent was everywhere in his speech, so he was constantly laughed at when he talked, but as a joke, not in the make-fun-of way.

"You can't pull that one anymore," said George Ferraldin, another 2nd Class, "because everyone will bet along with you."

Everyone had to laugh about that one. Maybe it was because it was true. This felt like it could go forever.

The pilot radioed Mendez from the main cockpit. "Sir, I need to come take a look at this. It'sâ€¦weird. I can't figure it out."

"All right, I'll be right there," he replied, and stood up to walk towards the cockpit.

"You better come back with some good news," yelled George.

"Yeah, yeah, I know the routine," Mendez said, heading his way inside and closing the door behind him.

The cockpit seemed a little frantic. Joe, the main pilot, kept yelling at Frank, the co-pilot over some blips on the radar. Frank was thinking the worst and Joe was just trying to make him shut the hell up and fly the damn ship. Well, maybe Joe was still acting normal.

"Glad you could join us, Mendez," said Joe once he finally had Frank calmed down. "I need you take a look at this."

_Mendez walked up to the radar they were arguing about, and took a look. It was always thanks to that radar that the pilot could tell Mendez's team how bad of a situation they were getting into, which always excited the Spartans. Now, it was like it was acting up.

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The radar worked like sonar. The middle green blip was the ship, and a white bar would swing around it, picking up anything around the ship. Any enemy activity showed up in red blips or spots, depending on how big an enemy the radar picked up, and now, the screen was buzzing of activity: one giant blip and a few small ones. All of them were surrounding the Amistad and closing in. Mendez took a quick look out of the cockpit's window, but he saw nothing. There was no sign of enemy activity—out of the window. Yet, the radar was telling them they were being surrounded.

"_Are you sure you ran full maintenance on this thing before we took off?" Mendez asked Joe._

"_Yep, sure did, and them boys said she was working proply," he said, completely self-assured of his statement. Now, there was no mistaking about it. Something was up._

"_Keep me updated," Mendez said, "I'm going to get the others ready."_

"_I'll keep ya posted, cap," Joe said. Mendez walked out of the cockpit, where his team was going about their business. Billy was the main attention this time. He was probably talking about his girlfriend back home._

"_She'll be so happy to see me tomorrow," he said with great enthusiasm. Billy was on leave tomorrow for two days to go see his girl. He had become really excited in the last few days about finally returning to some normal country life—even if it was only for a weekend._

"_Well, what are you going to do when you get there?" Petty Officer 1st Class Harold Kuzak asked him. They all lifted their faces and leaned in to hear his response, as if they were all thinking the same thing._

"_Well, I'm thinking about popping the question to her," Billy said, and that sent cheers throughout the whole ship. Everyone started a group hug right on top of Billy, giving him their congratulations. Mendez was about to join in, but then a sharp jolt through the ship sent everyone crazy._

"_What the hell was that?" yelled George, regaining his composure and grabbing began typing in the security code for the weapons locker, just like his trained instinct told him to. As the rest followed

suit, Mendez ran back to the cockpit to check on the situation. He was definitely going to get in deep shit for this one._

Once inside, it wasn't a picturesque sight. The co-pilot had been shot, his blood splattered over the seat of where his body used to be. However, it was very distinctive of what attacked them. Surrounding that section of the ship, which was literally blown away, was covered in a bright purple glow. Grabbing on to Joe's seat to not be blown out with the wind, he found the horrible truth. They were under attackâ€|by the Covenant.

Joe was working frantically, trying to keep the ship stabilized. His was definitely keeping his cool about things, since he was nearly killed, too.

"_I don't know where da shot came from!" he yelled over the wind, as if already answering Mendez's first question. Some people had a good way of doing that these days. Mendez quickly looked at the radar, and sure enough, the blips were still there. They were representing the Covenant forces that had somehow snuck up on them, thanks to their cloaking abilities, and were now about to bring their ship down._

"_Men, get ready! We have a Code Purple!" Mendez yelled to his crew. That was their code name for, "Sweet Jesus! Those Covenant bastards are chasing our ass! Get you damn guns ready and shoot them down!" In a nutshell, "Shoot or be boned!" Either way you took the phrase, there was only one way to respond: grab weapons, open turret hatches, and start shooting._

The weapon crates were opened, and George began handing out everyone's requested weapons like a candy store owner passing out the goods to the kids. Billy jerked his MA2B, a weaker version of MA5B assault rifle, and sat at his post about 2 feet from the cockpit door. As he was opening the hatch, everyone else, including Mendez, were grabbing their weapons in case Close Quarters Combat would have to be an option.

Billy loaded the mounted 50 mm chain gun that was positioned in front of one of the hatch doors, cocked it, and unlocked the door. Everyone else began to take their positions as well, getting ready to begin the defense; Mendez had loaded his M90 Shotgun and placed it in his holster. As he started loading the grenades, though, he noticed everyone else was staring blankly out of the windows.

"_Sir," George said, hesitantly, "youâ€|might want to take a look at this."_

Mendez walked up to George's window hatch and stared out at what was catching everyone's tongues. As he soon saw, though, his became caught in the webbing as well.

_Right before their eyes, the cloaks that had shielded the Covenant's arrival, were now slowly dissipating, revealing the treasureâ€|or trap, that hid underneath. On Mendez's side, it just happened to uncover a Destroyer. It's sleek, metallic look gleamed on the desert sun, nearly blinding Mendez, even through Mendez's visor. Shielding his eyes, he ran to the other side and looked out of Billy's window, which showed a Carrier and surrounding Banshees. Not much of a fleet, and more like a frigate, they were still outnumbered, outgunned, and

out of hope._

"_Sir, they're charging their weapons!" Kuzak yelled. Mendez turned, and sure enough, a small, red glowing line began to emanate from the Destroyer's main weapon. The glowing line grew to a huge solid red stripe, the glow intensified, almost unbearable. They were going to try and shoot them to Hades._

"_Evasive maneuvers!" Mendez yelled to the captain. Joe heard, and began to initialize the main thrusters. Mendez knew, though, that they didn't have enough time to escape this one. They were going down. The Amistad was going down._

"_George, Kuzak, get away from the windows!" he yelled, and they quickly jumped out of their seats and braced the hand rails on the other side of the ship. They had quite a sixth sense, so they knew of Mendez's decision. This was not going to end happily._

"_Sir, the engines are failing!" screamed the pilot, trying to steady the battle-hardened Pelican the Destroyer fired it's plasma weapons and connected at the rear of the ship, rocking the ship out of control and destroying the engines. Mendez had never thought they would try a surprise attack. He should've prepared for the worst. Now, he was paying the price for it as the plasma ate away at the Amistad's aft hull armor._

"_We're falling too fast! I won't be able to make an emergency landing. We're going to crash!"_

The ship began to gain more speed as its nose rushed towards the ground. The ship began to rattle as gravity and friction grounded on the plating. The Spartans could do nothing but hold on for dear life. That is, if life would be given after this.

Soon, the cockpit's window detected the first sign of land. It was all desert surface. There was no civilization and no soft landing zone. This wasn't going to end well.

"Sir!" yelled Petty Officer First Class Harold Kuzak from the back of the ship. Mendez knew it was him. He could detect his Arabian voice a mile away. He looked in the direction he heard the voice, and detected the only Spartan in blue armor. He was the rookie, and this was only his third assignment with the Spartan team. When he looked, they eyed each other for a while, hoping someone would say something.

They shared a history. Kuzak was an illegal alien from Eridanus III. The planet fell under communism years ago, and allowed no one to leave. He snuck out and joined the Navy in an attempt to start a new life. Mendez, the captain of the squad he was assigned to when he graduated from Project MJORLINR, found out about his secret. That's when Mendez promised Kuzak he didn't have to go home.

As they stared, Kuzak slowly lifted his hand and saluted his captain. Mendez saluted back, for he knew all that there was to say.

"Everyone, brace for impact!" yelled the pilot, as the ship lived its last five seconds before meeting its demise.

_Smokeâ€|fireâ€|a broken ship, crashed upon the desolate surface of a planet, long deserted, and long forgottenâ€|signs and evidence of Covenant fire and warfareâ€|dead Spartans mangled with the wreckageâ€|and their captain, the lone survivor, wedged between two pieces of the shipâ€|all of this and more equal one hell of a bad day for Master Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Mendez. _

When he first woke up to immediate darkness, he thought his soul had been sent to the cold confines of hell, but when he heard the crackling of fire, and felt the pain in his left shoulder, he realized this was all reality, and wished it was really hell instead. Giving it all his might, he pushed up on the giant ship metal that blocked him from getting back up again. After a couple of tries, he finally made it budge, and the rest of it came sliding off.

_It took him a few minutes to regain his composure, but after his vision became used to the hot, burning sun of the desert-planet of Octanus VI, he prayed to God he was having a nightmare. He began to survey the layout of the situation, and could come up with one observation: ambush. The purple hue of Covenant weapon-fire still glowed upon the remaining pieces of Amistad, his squad's main mode of transportation across any planet, and his team was nowâ€|gone. There were no signs of other life anywhere. Why was it only him that survived? _Why couldn't I die instead? _He thought, looking towards the sky for answers. God must've left this planet years ago, though, for the look of things. And now, he was all alone, on a deserted planet, with no human life whatsoever. _

But then, he heard something. Distant at first, but it rose to cacophonous levels. Mendez realized he hearing was fully healing, for he heard the sound's direction now, as he turned around to see what it wasâ€|and wished he could drop dead on the spot. Billy Hutch was still alive, but a piece of the ship that had probably broken off when it crashed was now through Billy's chest, the sharp end protruding from his lower back. It must've just missed the heart, since Billy was alive. Mendez could only assume that he wished it had gone through his heart, then he wouldn't have to suffer.

Mendez ran over to Billy, hoping there was some way of saving him from a painful death. "Billy!" he yelled, as he came closer. Billy turned his head to the left and saw his Chief running towards him. His visor had broken, and his face was almost completely visible, save for his mouth. He tried to strengthen up on impulse, but the pain was too excruciating. He arched back into a curled position and let out loud sobs of sorrow.

"Don't try to move, idiot!" Mendez yelled, but not like an order. It was more like a suggestion, since now didn't seem a good time to bark out orders like Billy was a dog. Mendez was able to get a closer look at the surrounding wound from the piece of metal. Mendez must've been out for at least an hour, since blood had already hardened and caked around the metal.

"How long have I been out?" Mendez asked.

_"At least an hour, s-sir," he stuttered, as it was difficult to talk as well. Mendez was afraid of that. He thought at least MEDEVAC would

have arrived, but no other ships were here. Even the Covenant frigate had cleared out._

"God dammit," he said to himself. He then looked at Billy and said, "Don't worry, Billy. I'll try to get it out."

Billy grunted, "OK." Mendez then grabbed the short end of the metal, on the side of Billy's chest, and slowly pulled up on it. Suddenly, Billy screamed at the top of his lungs. The pain had intensified by just a small tug on the metal, and Mendez quickly recoiled from the scream. Spartans are battle-hardened, but nerves are a whole different story.

"I-I'm sorry," Billy choked, his eyes beginning to tear up. Billy was clutching his chest, wishing he could have it removed. Still, reality was upon him and Mendez as well. Even if Mendez was able to pull it out, too much blood would stream. Mendez could tell he had already lost a lot, since his face was pale. Not even MEDEVAC would be able to stop the bleeding, whenever they were going to arrive. They both knew the horrible truth of the situation.

Either way, Billy was not going to live from this. He was going to die.

They both stared at each other for a few minutes, reading each other's faces. A long, painful silence, but not as painful as what Billy was going through, lasted for what felt like an eternity. The desert winds churned on the sands, kicking up the dust into small clouds. It was the only thing, besides the dying fires, that made a single sound on this dead planet.

So many thoughts came to Mendez. He began to think that this was his fault. He should've been able to stop the Covenant attack. He could've told his men to fire at where the dots were. He thought he could've done something, to prevent the terrible end to this ever-depressing story. Mendez clenched his fists in disgust at himself. He became enraged at his actions. This was not the way a leader was supposed to handle a team. He wanted to punish himself for his wrong-doing.

"Don't be m-mad at yourself," Billy said, as if reading his thoughts. His words came so slowly, that Mendez knew he was losing hope of living. He began to cough up blood from his punctured lungs. The color of pain trickled from his lips and from his chest. Mendez could hardly stand to stare at him.

"M-Mendez," he said, breaking the silence again, "I n-need you to do me a favor." Almost every word came out after a gasp of air, since even talking became a struggle.

Mendez looked at him, his eyes pleading him to do whatever he was going to ask him to do. "What is it?"

"You and I both know, Iâ€|" he coughed another slash of blood before continuing, "I won't be able to survive this."

_"Don't say that," Mendez interrupted, trying to think up some excuse to make Billy stay alive. "NAVCOM would have picked up our ship going down, so MEDEVAC should be here soon." Still, he couldn't even convince himself. He began to doubt that MEDEVAC would even show up.

He would probably be stuck on this planet as well._

"You know they won't be here in t-time," he gasped. "I'm not going to make it. So, Iâ€|" he struggled to ask, squinting from an outburst of pain, "I want you to kill me."

Mendez's heart suddenly quit beating. He had been asked many favors before by his teammates, and they all ranged from different things. From time on leave to extra ammo, he had always tried to do exactly what they asked for, to an extent. Yet thisâ€|this was asking too much. Asking for deathâ€|what was he thinking?

"What?" he asked, thinking maybe he didn't hear what he asked for. Billy looked at him, knowing he heard what he just said. Mendez heard what he said, but that doesn't mean he had to accept it.

"Please, sir," he screamed from a harsh voice, as his soul slowly slipped away. His pain was too much, and it was taking him deeper into the pits of hell. "I'm begging you, just kill me!"

Mendez could no longer stand it. He stood and took a couple of paces away from Billy, slowly thinking it over. Should he take away his life, or make him suffer, knowing either way, his death would be on his shoulders? The options were weighed back and forth, and it became clear that there was only one option to take. Billy continued to cry in pain. Mendez looked at him, and realized what he had to do.

He walked back to Billy and asked him one questionâ€|, "Where's your handgun?"

Billy knew of Mendez's decision and let out a small smile before jerking back from another burst of pain. He raised his arm, shaking violently from probably reaching a state of shock, and extended his index finger, pointing about a few feet from a broken weapon locker, and quickly let it fall back to the ground. Mendez looked and saw his M6C Magnum. He went to it, picked it up, cocked it, and found that it still had one bullet left. Unfortunately, that was all he needed to end a life.

He walked back to Billy, who decided to use all of his strength to straighten his body. He was going to die with dignity, with a job well done as a Spartan.

Mendez slowly raised the gun and aimed for Billy's temple, where he knew one shot would kill him. He decided not to shoot the heart, since he had already been punctured there by the ship's metal.

"Wait!" Billy yelled, almost recoiling.

"What?" Mendez quickly said, hoping Billy had changed his mind.

"Promise me something else."

"What is it?" he replied, asking himself what else he would want.

"Please tell my girlfriendâ€|that I died from an Elite. Don't ever l-let her find outâ€|" he wheezed, "the truth."

Mendez's hand began to shake as he slowly pulled the trigger. The life of a soldier only lasts for so long. Mendez wondered if Billy's life was flashing right before his eyes, because Mendez's saw a grim future flash before his. He knew this was best, though, so in a since, he felt a string of relief.

"I promise," Mendez answered, pulling the trigger, launching the bullet into Billy's head. There was no scream. There was no more pain. There was only the shot from the Magnum, and then all was silent. The only sound was the wind, continuing to swirl the dust of Octanus VI, the planet of death.

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>Author's Footnote: _BAM! I hope that wasn't too tragic. Any comments or better suggestions are accepted, since I plan to do a MAJOR edit before going on to Part 1. Oh, you guys must not have realized that this all led up to the major story, huh? Oh well, surprise, surprise...sorry! But, don't worry, because the next part involves a new Spartan, more teammates, new weapons, Flood, and a Covenant Elite...who will be very important to the story. On that note, I need someone very experienced on Elites to give me as much information on Elites, like how they are named, how an alliance with a Spartan and an Elite would work out, battle methods, anything...I'm hoping you can help me, Phantom Ice-Cream. All right, that's it for now. Chapter 7 and 8, the final two in the major Prologue, shall hopefully be up much sooner than this one. I can't wait to get to Part 1. I have so much ideas. Keep those reviews coming! I love reading the opinions and criticisms of others. It lets me know that I'm not perfect, and that I still have room for improvement.

Signing off,
> GundamFreakX<p>

* * *

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End
file.